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How do my emotions affect tone of voice during my teaching practices?

Jessica Roman

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the effect of an educators emotions on their tone of voice during teaching practices. This study was done at CS Elementary school, a Title 1 school located in Sunny Side, PA. At CS, 85% of the kids are from low-income homes; there is a 15:1 student per teacher ratio and 15% of students have a disability. I researched how a teachers emotions can affect the way their voice is presented in the classroom because stress is a major factor in the life of an educator. Student surveys and journals were used to capture the day in the life of a teacher. There have been some set-backs to my study due to the global pandemic COVID-19 of 2020. Findings showed that emotions do in fact have an effect on the tone, but not as much as expected. It was obvious in the findings that mostly positive and encouraging tones were used despite internal emotions.

Introduction/Context

I am a Student Teacher at CS Elementary School Sunny Side, PA. Both students and teachers have a lot of stress weighted on their shoulders and I chose to research how my voice would be affected in my classroom. This question allowed me to think about my emotions inside and outside of school to understand who I am as an educator. I learned what will affect my emotions further, what can help me forget emotions, and how to balance emotions while teaching. This was a very difficult study because everything I felt needed to be recorded. It is important that teacher emotions are researched because they carry the weight of all the students on their shoulders.

Methods/ Data Analysis

1. Personal journals
2. Student work
3. Calm videos

Findings

1. As I became more confident in my classroom, my voice was noticeably more positive and encouraging.
2. Within a few days, I was able to find a balance between being a student and being an educator.
3. Giving off positive tones, students moods and attitudes adjusted to how I was presenting myself to them.
4. Calming videos set a mood for the entire day.

Conclusions

The limitations of the study are that I solely focused my research on my tone of voice. Next time, I would study more; how my body language is affected by my emotions. I'd also like to have further noted specific tones of voice I had for individual students during teaching. I used specific levels of my voice for different students; some students did not react to a loud and positive voice, they needed a calmer, more individualized voice to learn. Lastly, the global pandemic of the Coronavirus limited my time in the classroom, cutting of student teaching weeks early.

Through my research, I have learned that regulating and acknowledging my emotions is the best thing an educator can do. Despite how I felt personally, I continuously had a positive and encouraging tone during my practices. Becoming self-aware was very important for me during my student teaching placement.

Discussions/Implications for Practice

This study has helped me grow and plan for the future because it allowed me to think about my emotions inside and outside of school to understand who I am as a teacher. I learned what affected my emotions further, what helped me forget emotions, and more while teaching. For my future classroom, I feel well prepared for emotions coming from myself, colleagues, and students. I learned that by spending time to genuinely understand who your students are as individuals; it will be helpful in the long run when trying to connect with them. I plan to continue playing stimulating/calming videos for students to peacefully complete work.